MARRACK

420 Mulberry Ln
Bellaire
77401

8 Nov 78

Dear Mrs Harrison

I thought you
your office might wish to
be kept informed with the
Mc Fairmes - Sludge Dumping
abutting the Intercoastal Canal
7 miles West of IH-10 at Galveston Tx

This is a leveed dump site
built in Spartina marsh supported
by a spur canal & Los, probably
improperly in view of Executive Order 11990
a Corps of Engineers permit for extension.

Their site on the north side of Galveston
West Bay is exposed to storm surge.

the sludge comes from the Washburn Tunnel Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Plant which receives wastes from 5 Petro-chemical plants & thus as yet unanalyzed chemicals. This presents one kind of problem.

To enclosed are from Houston Audubon Soc & my contributions to the hearing held by Tx Dept Water Resources which has been adjourned till early December.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

D P Parnell

on fish, crabs in Lavaca Bay

By HAROLD SCARLETT
Post Environment Writer

HP 21 Oct 78

Game fish and crabs in Lavaca Bay are still too tainted with poisonous mercury for safe eating, a state health official said Friday.

The Texas Department of Health Resources issued a public warning seven months ago that regular consumption of fish and crabs from the bay could imperil human health.

Lloyd Crabb, a shellfish sanitation specialist for the department, says the warning is still in effect.

Fish from the bay are still showing as much as six times the safe level for mercury in seafood, Crabb said, even though federal officials have doubled the permissible level since the warning last March.

The federal Food and Drug Administration, after three years of re-evaluation, raised the safe level from 0.5 to 1 parts per million (PPM) of mercury, Crabb said.

HOWEVER, HE SAID, redfish samples from Lavaca Bay have shown as high as 6.9 PPM of mercury.

Maximums of 6.4 PPM were found in drum, he said, with up to 4 in gafftop and 2.1 in speckled trout and flounder.

Crabb said these figures are a compilation of all fish samplings from the bay up until last June 15. But he said later laboratory tests since that time have produced similar high levels of mercury.

Mercury in crabs has been running around 1 to 3 PPM, he said.

There has been little commercial fishing or crabbing in Lavaca Bay in recent years, state officials say.

But the bay, midway between Houston and Corpus Christi, has been traditionally popular with sport fishermen. They were the primary target of the health warning.

During a worldwide mercury scare in 1970, state water officials discovered years-long mercury pollution of the bay by the Aluminum Company of America plant at Point Comfort.

Alcoa quickly reduced its mercury discharge to near zero.

THE STATE CLOSED 11,400 acres of the bay to oystering because of mercury contamination, but the oysters surprised everyone by cleansing themselves of the heavy metal in a year's time.

Bay oysters now show no mercury problem, Crabb said.

Old mercury in the bay-bottom sediments is believed to be the source of the present problem, but state officials are baffled over what triggered the mercury flareup.

Paul Kutchinski, the Corpus Christi district supervisor for the Texas Department of Water Resources, said a continuing surveillance has shown no excessive mercury discharges recently from Alcoa or any other source.

"We have sampled everything in the food chain from grass to various levels of nekton (swimming marine organisms)," Kutchinski said. "But we just haven't been able to put a finger on the entry point for the mercury.

"If we could, we could probably figure out what's happening."